

## Sermon: Stepping into the Promised Land

### **IN** *Opportunities to connect and pray as a group*

1. What memory aids do you use to keep from forgetting things? How do these help you?
2. What is something important you have forgotten? What were the consequences for you?

### **UP** *Time that is devoted to the Word of God*

1. Compare the Israelites' experiences in the Wilderness with their expectations of the Promised Land. What were the differences? What were the similarities?
2. Pastor Ashwin stated, 'God wanted to teach them (the Israelites) two critical lessons that revolved around trust and humility. Interestingly, it is easier to demonstrate these two qualities in the wilderness in times of adversity.' (Deut 8:2, 16)  
What was God trying to accomplish? Why is God still working in this way?
3. Reread Deut 8:1-20. Note the number of times that the words 'remember' and 'do not forget' are used. What were the Israelites asked to remember? What were they 'not to forget'?  
What helped them to 'remember'? What caused them 'to forget' what God had done? (Also, Num 14:2-4; Josh 5:12)
4. What are some specific ways for the Christ-follower to 'remember the Lord Your God' (8:18)... 'so that it may go well with you'? (8:16)

### **OUT** *Seek to be the Community of God's people in your community*

1. How should the warning of Deut 8:19-20 impact the Christ-follower today?
2. In what area of your life do you need to remember the Lord?  
In your daily routine, how can you actively remember Him?
3. For what 'promised land' might God be preparing you?  
How can the group pray for you?

**UP – IN – OUT** *reflect a balanced life including a focus on our personal relationship with the Father (UP), staying connected to the Body (IN), and reaching our world (OUT).*

### **Resources:**

Story referenced by Pastor Ashwin in full text of his sermon:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aONiGTmnbE>

[www.snopes.com](http://www.snopes.com) (John Griffith)

### **THE WORD (NIV)**

#### **Deuteronomy 8:1-20**

Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land the LORD promised on oath to your ancestors. <sup>2</sup>Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. <sup>3</sup>He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. <sup>4</sup>Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. <sup>5</sup>Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you. <sup>6</sup>Observe the commands of the LORD your God, walking in obedience to him and revering him. <sup>7</sup>For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land—a land with brooks, streams, and deep springs gushing out into the valleys and hills; <sup>8</sup>a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; <sup>9</sup>a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills. <sup>10</sup>When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you. <sup>11</sup>Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. <sup>12</sup>Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, <sup>13</sup>and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, <sup>14</sup>then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. <sup>15</sup>He led you through the vast and dreadful wilderness, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. <sup>16</sup>He gave you manna to eat in the wilderness, something your ancestors had never known, to humble and test you so that in the end it might go well with you. <sup>17</sup>You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." <sup>18</sup>But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today. <sup>19</sup>If you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed. <sup>20</sup>Like the nations the LORD destroyed before you, so you will be destroyed for not obeying the LORD your God.

# Sermon Study Summary

Today's sermon concludes Pastor Ashwin's mini sermon series "Through the Wilderness," which reviewed the 40 year wilderness journey of God's people. The primary focus of this sermon series was to help us be cognizant of God's method of preparing us for what's to come. The entire wilderness experience was a training ground for Israel to get them ready for life in the Promised Land. God imparted lessons in the wilderness that would define the rest of their existence in the land they would settle in. He also wants to deepen our walk with Him. The wilderness serves as a preparation time for the next season of our lives that is about to unfold.

In the Book of Deuteronomy (Chapter 8), Moses was speaking to the new generation of Israelites. The 40 years of wandering in the wilderness was behind them, the land of promise stood before them. Moses urged them to apply the lessons they had learned through the wilderness (Deut 8:6-20) when they got to the Promised Land. In the wilderness they had God journeying with them as their instructor, leading them on a day to day basis. They wouldn't have that luxury any longer in the Promised Land; they would have to do it on their own. The Promised Land offered a new set of challenges for the Israelites; they had to learn how to live by faith in the midst of prosperity, something they had never known for centuries. Moses' concern was how they would handle this newfound success, this coming prosperity. God wanted to teach them two critical lessons that revolved around **trust** and **humility**. It is easier to demonstrate these two qualities in the wilderness in times of adversity. The question for Israel was would they apply those very lessons in this land of affluence.

The first lesson was **Trust**. In the wilderness the Israelites were forced to depend on God. They lacked adequate food and water; not trusting God in the wilderness was simply not an option. They were constantly in need and forced to rely on God's daily provision. As soon as they would step into the Promised Land, the miraculous supply of manna would stop. Now in a land of plenty, they would have to fend for themselves (Joshua 5:12). This is in complete contrast to the wilderness. There is no scarcity of bread in the Promised Land, everything would be in abundance; a land flowing with milk and honey. **The landscape may change but God's expectations would remain the same.** God wanted them to continue walking in dependence on Him as they did in the wilderness. That would be the proof that they had learned their lessons. Israel was tested in the wilderness through deprivation, but now their tests would be through the problem of plenty. In this new setting, it would be so easy to move from the posture of dependence to self sufficiency; to praise themselves instead of praising God. The Promised Land brought the tantalizing option of not trusting in God. They were in danger of being enamoured by God's provisions more than the God who provided for them. Difficult seasons of life often produce great spiritual fruit. **The real test of character is not how we respond to adversity but to affluence.** Not leaning on God is never an option for a Christian; we are to walk in total dependence from the beginning to the end, all the way.

The second lesson God wanted to teach his people was **Humility**. In the wilderness, God humbled Israel. He stripped their pride by cutting off the supply lines. It is difficult to be proud when you have nothing. What is there to be proud of? No accomplishments, no productivity, no great exploits to put on display. That was Israel's story. In the wilderness, everyone knew that God was the source of all blessings. No one could take credit for manna, no one could boast about their clothes and shoes not wearing out for 40 years. But in the Promised Land they would be in danger of becoming proud, for taking credit for their accomplishments (Deut 8:11-14). Israel would have military success, they would live in fine houses, they would have an abundance of flocks and herds, their silver and gold would increase, and everything they had would multiply. Surrounded by so many blessings, it was easy to forget who blessed them. It is this arrogance and self sufficiency that Moses was cautioning them about. It is critical that we never ever forget where we first started, never lose sight of your time in the wilderness where our faith was formed. **Anything good in our lives is a gracious gift from the hand of God, totally undeserved. The rightful attitude is to give God praise, testifying to what He has done rather than drawing attention to ourselves.**

As followers of Christ, we are so much like Israel. We too were once slaves to sin. We were in bondage to the devil with no righteousness of our own. We were morally superior to none; we all were dead in our sins. There is nothing that we could have done to earn a right standing with God. It is in that helpless state Jesus reached out to us. Our chains were broken and we were redeemed not by perishable things like gold or silver but by the precious blood of Jesus. We received the free gift of His grace. We were made part of God's family. We were given life, a hope and a future. There is only one anchor that always holds; it is Jesus. The Scriptures tell us the ones who boast should boast in the Lord. (1 Cor 1:31) Israel shut God out so many times. Whenever life was good they suffered from "spiritual amnesia;" they went far from God. When things became hard they returned back to the faith. You can witness this repetitive cycle all through their history. Unfortunately, it is the pattern of so many of our lives today. How do we break free from it? The Book of Deuteronomy can be summed up in the one word "**Remember.**" It is a call to recollect God's gracious acts from the past. Remember, whatever blessings we have in life today come from the Lord. We need to remember God, never taking our eyes off Him. Just as Moses commanded the Israelites to remember, Jesus gave us a similar commandment as well, "Do this in remembrance of Me." Jesus was making reference to His own sacrifice as He instituted the Lord's Supper. Whenever we celebrate the Lord's Supper we are recalling and reapplying the Gospel to our lives. **Nothing will keep us more centered in our Christian life than remembering the Cross on a regular basis. We are forever grateful that God the Father gave His only Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**